

A YES vote on Ballot Measure 2 would prohibit the shooting of wolves and grizzly bears from the air or by using a plane to land and shoot, as part of a predator control program, unless the Commissioner of Fish and Game determines, based on adequate data, that a biological emergency exists.

A biological emergency is defined as a condition where wolves or bears are depleting a prey population to a point that if not corrected, will cause an irreversible decline in a prey population unless control measures using aircraft are implemented.

This would restore a prohibition that an overwhelming majority of Alaskans passed by initiative in 1996, but was subsequently overturned by the legislature. We believe a majority of Alaskans still support this measure, as evidenced by the fact that 57,000 residents signed our petition, in 37 of the 40 state election districts, with strong support in both urban and rural areas.

Ballot Measure 2 is seen as a reasonable and moderate management policy that actually allows predator control using aircraft in serious cases where predators are directly responsible, but not on an ongoing basis just to inflate game populations for ever increasing numbers of hunters, when predators are not causing a biological problem. By allowing limited aircraft control measures in emergencies, rural subsistence hunting will be protected and declining game populations can be enhanced.

If Ballot Measure 2 passes, it will still remain legal to trap and hunt wolves on foot or by snow-machine. A large majority of wolves are taken by these methods at present.

The organization promoting a YES vote on Ballot Measure 2, Alaskans for Wildlife, is composed of long-term state residents who actively hunt but believe that limits on the use of aircraft for bear and wolf control are necessary because of past abuses involved with this type of shooting, enforcement difficulties and the damage done to the image of responsible game management in Alaska.

Past experience has indicated that predator control programs using aircraft can only be successful if they are scientifically justified, cost-effective and grounded in broad public acceptance. Alaska's present program is not.

Please vote YES on Ballot Measure 2. It gets rid of a bad wildlife law while sending a message to the Alaska legislature that voters meant it when they passed the measure placing serious limits on aircraft-assisted predator shooting the first time.

Joel Bennett
Author and initiative Committee Member